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COMMANDERS DIGEST

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Appeal For International Justice

A crowd of more than 3,800 people gathered at Constitution Hall to hear President Nixon, members of Congress, DoD and civic leaders deplore the treatment of U.S. servicemen listed as prisoners of war or missing in action in Southeast Asia. Between 800 and 1,000 prisoner of war wives attended.

Top Officials, Citizens Deplore Treatment Of POWs; Enemy Refuses To Honor Geneva Convention Accords

The spotlight of national publicity was focused on the plight of American servicemen held prisoner by the enemy in Southeast Asia during ceremonies at Constitution Hall, Washington, D. C., May 1.

The President of the United States, members of Congress, Department of Defense and civic leaders all deplored the treatment of U.S. men held captive or listed as missing in action by the enemy.

It was apparent that the wives and families of those prisoners need the support and sympathy of everyone, everywhere, for they are the ones who suffer greatest and perhaps work hardest for a cause they know is just. This is true even though the majority do not know if their loved ones are alive or dead.

Basically, the May 1 ceremony was an appeal sponsored by Congress for international justice and a call to other nations of the world to explore all peaceful avenues available to help insure the men are treated humanely and fairly in accordance with the standards established by the Geneva Convention.

President Richard Nixon proclaimed a Day of Prayer on May 3 and said, "one of the cruelist tactics of the war in Vietnam is the Communists' refusal to identify all prisoners of war,

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Top Officials, Citizens Deplore Treatment Of POWs; Enemy Refuses To Honor Geneva Convention Accords

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to provide information about them and to permit their families to communicate with them regularly."

But it was the pleas of the wives and families of those held prisoner by the enemy in Southeast Asia that had the biggest impact.

Mrs. James Stockdale, a prisoner of war wife and coordinator of the National League of Families of American Prisoners in Southeast Asia, recognized that progress was "painfully slow for those who have waited so long."

There was hope in her appeal for international justice. She said through chain letter and word-of-mouth "we are joined together across the nation and the world in our efforts to make (all people) aware of the desperate plight of our men."

Collectively, the wives seek the support of all people—in and out of government, at home and abroad. Their goal: the release of U.S. servicemen held prisoners of war or listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia.

They ask for moral and material help in their struggle to learn of their loved ones, and to bring them home safely. Although the wives say "people have been very kind to us," what they really seek is more support and concern of the people of America.

Congressman Burt L. Talcott (R-Calif.) presented a strong warning to Hanoi in behalf of the wives and families of those held prisoner. As a former prisoner of war in Germany, Congressman Talcott noted:

"In the future, North Vietnam may need and want acceptance in the community of civilized and peaceful nations. The North Vietnam Government today would be well advised to emulate the United States and other governments who comply with the terms of the Geneva Convention and treat their prisoners decently . . ."

Perhaps the hardest-hitting speaker at the May 1 ceremony was H. Ross Perot, a civic leader from Dallas, Texas. Mr. Perot has worked relentlessly for the release of those listed as prisoner of war or missing in action.

His conviction is that Hanoi cannot risk the wrath of the American people on the prisoner issue.

He believes that by making every American aware of, and incensed by, the treatment of American prisoners is a language Hanoi understands. He sees constant pressure and publicity as the key to success and eventual fair and humane treatment accorded by the Geneva Convention.

Mr. Perot would place replicas of bamboo cages, cement cells, a tree with persons chained to it, and earthen holes in prominent positions in the nation's capital as a constant reminder of the prisoner situation.

A notable appraisal of the May 1 ceremony was expressed by the Honorable Warren G. Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, who as Chairman of the Department of Defense Prisoner of War Policy Committee, attended the affair as one of the honored guests.

Secretary of Defense Laird has informal chat with prisoner of war wives at Constitution Hall and insists our record be such "that when these men are released we can look them in the eye and we can tell them in all honesty that while they were gone, the U.S. government did absolutely everything it could to insure their humane treatment and release and also did everything it could to assist their wives, their children, their parents and their other relatives."

Mr. Nutter, in expressing his appreciation to Senator Bob J. Dole (R-Kan.), who was chief arranger for the May 1 activities, said:

"The event spoke eloquently not only for those members of the Congress who actively participated in the affair, but for all Americans throughout the country who are joining their voices in a demand upon the enemy to abide by the provisions of the Geneva Convention in its treatment of our men.

"I believe the finest measure of the affair was to be found in the faces and comments of the brave wives and families of the missing men, who made their way from every state in the nation in order to participate. From their comments, it was clear that their spirits had been lifted and their faith strengthened in experiencing at first hand the support and concern extended to them by so many members of the Congress."

That the American people are being made aware of the deplorable situation was evident everywhere.

As late as May 8, Brigadier General Daniel James Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, revealed to an audience in Gainesville, Fla., the hard statistics concerning the POW-MIA situation and told them it was their problem, too.

In the excerpts that follow Brig. Gen. James notes the gravity of the prisoner problem, saying "it is readily apparent from a few basic statistics."

Currently, he said, only about 450 of the 1,500 men are, with

varying degrees of certainty, believed to be prisoners of war. "However," he said, "I must hasten to point out that this determination has been made without any official confirmation by the enemy.

"A few of these men we list as prisoners have been identified as prisoners because they have been allowed to write to their families. Others have been seen in propaganda photographs or heard in propaganda broadcasts from Radio Hanoi. Still others are thought to be prisoners because they are so identified by the few men who have been released or escaped from captivity.

"There remain more than 1,000 men who are missing in action. At this time there is absolutely no way of knowing whether any of these men are dead or alive. Some have been in this missing category for more than five years . . ."

Brig. Gen. James said the more than 2,600 primary and secondary next-of-kin of the men are scattered in every one of the 50 states.

"Incidentally," he said, "Florida is the third ranking state in the number of next-of-kin, with a total of 173. That number is exceeded only by California with 325 and Texas with 187."

The general repeated what he had said previously:

"We will never forget these men or their families. We will be ceaseless in our determination to do all that is possible to obtain for these men and for their families the rights which are due them under the provisions of the Geneva Convention, which has been signed by more than 120 nations, including the United States, South Vietnam, and North Vietnam."

The humanitarian standards spelled out in the Geneva Convention call for the immediate release of sick and injured prisoners, impartial inspections of prisoner facilities, the complete identification of men held, and the right of prisoners to correspond freely with their families.

Brig. Gen. James said the North Vietnamese, the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao have consistently violated each of those simple international standards of conduct.

A group of prisoner of war wives and next-of-kin pose for a picture outside Constitution Hall. Brig. Gen. James (center of photo) was happy to pose with them and has promised "to speak out on this problem (POW-MIA) at every opportunity."

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, currently Chief of Naval Operations and nominated by President Nixon to be Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, addresses audience at Constitution Hall. On the admiral's left is Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.), Master of Ceremonies for the event and Chairman, Senate-House "Appeal for International Justice" Committee. On Senator Dole's left is Air Force Brigadier General Daniel James Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). At the far right is Secretary of Defense Laird.

He noted that the enemy has never released a list of men held in captivity and consequently thousands of relatives "have been anguished not knowing whether their loved ones are alive or dead."

The general believes it is true, however, that the most heart-rending effort on behalf of the men has been by their families—wives, parents and children. Many of them, he said, have travelled the world seeking information and assistance.

But the general also wanted it known that the Department of Defense "feels a heavy burden of responsibility" to both the missing men and to their families. He mentioned the heavy burden of responsibility felt by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird.

"Secretary Laird insists that our record be such," the general continued, "that when these men are released we can look them in the eye and we can tell them in all honesty that while they were gone, the U.S. Government did absolutely everything it could to insure their humane treatment and release and also did everything it could to assist their wives, their children, their parents and their other relatives.

"I, for one, intend to speak out on this problem at every opportunity," he said. Addressing his audience, the general said:

"You, too, can help. This is also your problem. These men are Americans. They deserve your concern, your support. Speak out and express that concern. Let Hanoi know that on this issue—a purely humanitarian concern for human lives—that this country and the world is united in condemning their barbaric and inhumane treatment of prisoners."

AN ERA OF NEGOTIATION

At a recent meeting of the Cornell Alumni Association, Secretary of State William P. Rogers outlined the efforts of the United States to solve two major foreign policy matters—peace in Southeast Asia and agreement with the Soviet Union to limit strategic armaments. Excerpts from his April 18 address are given here.

No two foreign policy matters are of greater importance today than the search for peace in Southeast Asia and the search for an agreement with the Soviet Union to limit strategic armaments.

In one case the objective is to seek an end to a conventional war and thus provide peace and stability to the Pacific area.

In the other it is to seek an end to an unparalleled, and certainly unconventional, arms contest in which man already has developed the capability to destroy mankind.

Strategic Arms Limitations Talks

(We have begun) substantive discussions with the Soviet Union in Vienna on the control of strategic nuclear weapons—commonly referred to as SALT. These could be among the most important international discussions in history. Our security is directly involved. So are the hopes of all peoples for peace and well being.

Security does not necessarily improve through the building of more complex and more destructive weapons.

In the last 20 years the United States and the Soviet Union have spent some $600 billion on their strategic forces. If the arms race proceeds unchecked, that amount or more is likely to be spent in the next 20 years in order to stay even.

(Recently) in the Soviet Union—before the talks got started—Communist Party General Secretary Brezhnev referred to them in a major speech.

He referred to the present world situation as one of "bitter political and ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism." He stated that Communists never approach disarmament from a position of "toothless pacifism." And he averred that the Soviet Union would respond to attempts "by any party whatsoever" to achieve military "superiority" over the Soviet Union by making the required increase in its own military might.

Negotiation Vs Confrontation

However, Mr. Brezhnev went on to say other things that were more encouraging. He said: "The Soviet Union would welcome a sensible agreement," that if the United States really wanted a stratgeic arms limitation treaty, "prospects for the negotiations may be viewed positively." And he concluded: "The Soviet Union, in any case, will do all within its power to see that these talks prove useful."

Let me reply by saying:

First, the United States does not believe the world should be condemned to continuing conflict. We want to end the era of confrontation and enter an era of negotiations with the Soviet Union . . . .

Second, we know, of course, that the Soviet Union has legitimate security interests to protect in these negotiations. President Nixon repeatedly has made it clear that we seek an agreement that respects the security interests of both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Third, as in the case of the Soviet Union, the United States has no intention of weakening our relative strategic capabilities while the discussions are taking place, on the assumption that there will be an early success at Vienna. In that spirit we are continuing the construction of our Safeguard program, and the President has asked for a modest addition this year.

Finally, the President has given our delegation a clear statement of purpose and authority to move to a discussion of specific proposals designed to achieve limitation—and eventual reduction—of strategic arms.

The Nixon Doctrine

Negotiation is the means through which we seek an arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union. Negotiation also characterizes the approach of the United States to the problems of Southeast Asia.

In the last few weeks, tensions have increased as a result of significant developments in Cambodia and Laos threatening their neutrality. The neutrality of each country has been recognized and supported by international agreements, previously negotiated at Geneva in 1954 and 1962. The neutrality of each is being threatened by North Vietnam, in direct violation of its solemn pledge as a signatory. . . . In Laos over 65,000 regular North Vietnamese troops have invaded and now occupy large portions of Laotian territory. About 40,000 are in the southern part of the country, along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. More than 25,000 North Vietnamese troops are in northern Laos. On Feb. 12, this force launched the current offensive which has led to the increased anxieties.

It should be noted that the United States has no ground combat forces in Laos, and we have no plans to introduce any. But we have extended—and will continue to extend—military assistance to the Laotian Government in order to help it maintain its neutrality.

The United States has consistently supported the Laotian Government in its efforts to bring about consultations under the 1962 Geneva accords.

Assault On Cambodia

As anxiety mounted following North Vietnam's February offensive in Laos, public interest shifted to Cambodia, when

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Questions And Answers: The Situation In Cambodia

(The following questions and answers on "The Situation In Cambodia" were compiled by the Department of State.)

Q.—The North Vietnamese have had sanctuaries in Cambodia for five years. Why did President Nixon wait until now to order U.S. ground operations into Cambodia?

A.—While these sanctuaries have long been a problem for our forces and those of our allies in South Vietnam, until recently the Cambodian Government was able to limit them and their use by the Communists by restricting the flow of supplies to them from the port of Sihanoukville and other coastal landing points. In recent months increasing North Vietnamese use of the sanctuaries prompted the Cambodian authorities to place further restrictions on them. In fact, Prince Sihanouk was actually traveling to Moscow and Peking to seek help in reducing Communist use of Cambodian territory when he was ousted from power in Phnom Penh.

When the Lon Nol Government replaced Sihanouk, it tried to enforce Cambodian neutrality more strictly by closing Sihanoukville to Communist traffic and seeking negotiations to obtain a Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army withdrawal from Cambodian territory. In April the North Vietnamese began moving more actively out of their sanctuaries and deeper into Cambodia in an effort to establish a solid Communist-held zone reaching to Sihanoukville and the sea along 600 miles of the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border. This would have given them a far stronger position in Cambodia than they had ever had; it would have assured them of potentially unlimited supply and replacement capabilities; and it would thus have posed a critically increased threat to remaining U.S. forces nearby across the South Vietnamese border. This would have called the feasibility of continuing the President's policy of withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Vietnam—Vietnamization—into serious question.

The problem presented to President Nixon in late April was thus wholly different, both politically and militarily, than the situation which existed previously.

Q.—What is the objective and scope of the U.S./Vietnamese operation in Cambodia?

A.—This military operation is limited in extent, purpose and duration. It is a combined U.S.-South Vietnam strike which involves several major enemy sanctuaries and adjacent border territories. In the so-called "Parrot's Beak" area, only 33 miles from Saigon, South Vietnamese forces have major responsibility for ground operations with the United States

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An Era Of Negotiation

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Prince Sihanouk was displaced. This event served to focus world attention on the illegal North Vietnamese occupation of parts of Cambodia and a growing Cambodian resentment of that occupation.

In Cambodia, as in Laos, North Vietnam has long been occupying territory in direct violation of its repeated promises to respect the country's neutrality. There are today some tens of thousands of North Vietnamese troops in Cambodia. In Cambodia, as in Laos, Hanoi is using armed force against a state where it has no legitimate rights and against a people with whom it has no ethnic affinity.

The cumulative effect of years of these violations has, for some time, caused the Cambodian Government to express increasing concern.

A year ago, before we re-established diplomatic relations with Cambodia with a small mission, we affirmed publicly our recognition and respect for the "sovereignty, independence, neutrality, and territorial integrity" of Cambodia within its present frontiers. The policy we expressed toward Cambodia then remains our policy toward Cambodia now.

Cambodia has wisely sought to negotiate a solution directly with the invaders. We hope that North Vietnam and the Viet Cong will respond, so that further resort to force can be averted in favor of a peaceful settlement acceptable to all sides.

Having said these things, I should point out that we recognize that the problems of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam are interrelated. We welcome initiatives by countries in or outside the area which might lead to progress toward restoration of peace in Southeast Asia. France, Indonesia, and New Zealand have all made suggestions which we are discussing with them and which may be helpful.

American Public Concern

The sharply increased fighting in Laos and the possibility of overt warfare in Cambodia have understandably caused concern among Americans. They ask if the war in Southeast Asia is widening rather than diminishing. They wonder if this means that the period of American involvement will be lengthened, rather than reduced.

The objective of the Nixon Administration is to avoid both these results.

It is true, of course, that we cannot be indifferent to the military pressures by North Vietnam on the independence and neutrality of Laos and Cambodia. They affect the safety of our own forces in South Vietnam and the prospects for peace there. They also affect the future stability of Southeast Asia. We continue to believe that an ultimate settlement to the Vietnam war must take Laos and Cambodia into account.

However, we are determined not to reverse the long-term direction of our policy toward fostering more self-reliance among Asian states.

In time this troubled region may cease to be the tinderbox of the Far East. Political settlements at some point in time may replace military pressures. We may see in Southeast Asia, as we may now be seeing in Vienna, the beginnings of an era of negotiation. That is our hope and that is what the Nixon Doctrine seeks to accomplish.

Questions And Answers: The Situation In Cambodia

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providing air and logistical support. In the "Fishhook" area, and other Communist base areas, American and South Vietnamese units are cleaning out an extensive complex of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong operation and supply depots which have been dug in over a long period.

The direct objective of this military operation is to capture enemy stores and supplies; to disrupt Communist logistics and communications capabilities; and to prevent the enemy from building his forces in the sanctuary areas in preparation for attacks on our troops and those of our allies in South Vietnam. When this is achieved our forces will withdraw into South Vietnam. Some U.S. forces have already done so; the President has announced that the great majority of U.S. troops will be out by the second week of June, and that the operation will be concluded by the end of June.

Q.—What have been the results of the operation so far?

A.—From a military standpoint the operation has been highly successful. Most of the Communist forces have been obliged to evacuate these areas. Several thousand North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops have been killed or captured. Huge stores of war materiel and food supplies have been taken. The Defense Department, on the basis of present information, estimates that the total volume of enemy ammunition seized so far in the Cambodian operations exceeds the total amount of enemy ammunition expended for the entire preceding year in Vietnam.

Based on these achievements in the first week of operations, it is estimated that the Communist war effort in South Vietnam has been seriously set back. We have probably gained more than half a year's time for the training of South Vietnamese armed forces, and by destroying Communist ammunition and supplies we have saved many American lives.

Q.—Are there any international pledges of respect for Cambodia's territorial integrity?

A.—Yes. Most important are the 1954 Geneva accords, which provided for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia and Laos and the withdrawal of Communist forces to the north of the provisional demarcation line in Vietnam. In the Final Declaration at Geneva the participants undertook to respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the three States. They also pledged to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of these States. North Vietnam, a signer of the accords and participant in the Declaration, has flagrantly violated them.

Q.—Why hasn't the situation in Cambodia been brought before the United Nations?

A.—While the Cambodian Government has made a general appeal to the United Nations to take action to compel the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces to put an end to their aggression against Cambodia, it has not requested formal Security Council action.

Speaking on the situation in Indochina on May 5, 1970, United Nations Secretary-General U Thant said:

> *"In view of the fact that several of the parties concerned are not members of the United Nations, and that many of its members, including some permanent members of the Security Council, are not in favor of United Nations involvement, the Organization has not been in a position so far to play a decisive part in bringing an end to the conflict."*

For our part, we would welcome and support any initiative in the United Nations or elsewhere which would lead to serious and constructive consideration of an action on the situation in Cambodia. Meanwhile, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, on May 5 the United States requested the President of the Security Council to circulate as a Security Council document a letter in which we reported the recent United States/Republic of Vietnam limited military action taken in exercise of the right of collective self-defense against acts of armed aggression by North Vietnamese forces based in Cambodia.

Q.—Did the Cambodian Government request U.S. forces?

A.—No. The Cambodians could not ask for help from American forces because to do so would be a renunciation of neutrality, and in effect would join them with South Vietnam and its allies against North Vietnam. Initially, Prime Minister Lon Nol said that no foreign troops would be required; that only additional arms and equipment would be needed for Cambodia's defense. When this proved insufficient he appealed for the assistance of ethnic Cambodians serving with the South Vietnamese Armed Forces.

While Prime Minister Lon Nol was not asked to approve or agree in advance to the joint military operations against the sanctuaries, he has said that this action represents a positive U.S. response to Cambodia's appeal for help in restoring its neutrality and repelling North Vietnamese and Viet Cong invaders.

Q.—Isn't this an invasion—a violation of Cambodia's neutrality?

A.—This is *not* an invasion. The areas in which these attacks have been launched are completely occupied and controlled by North Vietnamese forces. Once enemy installations and supplies in these areas are destroyed we will withdraw.

We have not violated Cambodia's neutrality; we are there with the approval of the Cambodian Government, which seeks to restore its neutrality by ending the illegal North Vietnamese occupation of part of its territory. The United States has recognized and respected the sovereignty, independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia since the 1954 Geneva accords. From 1965—when Prince Sihanouk broke off diplomatic relations with us—until August 1969 we did not have a diplomatic mission in Cambodia. We have provided no military or economic assistance to Cambodia since 1963.

Q.—Won't this action adversely affect our Vietnamization-withdrawal program?

A.—On the contrary—we believe it will facilitate it. Destroying the North Vietnamese installations and supplies in the sanctuaries should win at least six to 10 months for further strengthening of the South Vietnamese forces to meet future threats from this area without assistance of U.S. units. This will make it possible to continue our withdrawal program. The President has stated that the withdrawal of 150,000 Americans by next year, which he announced on April 20, will take place on schedule.

Q.—What assurances do we have that as soon as we leave the Communists won't return to rebuild the sanctuaries?

A.—None. But this would take considerable time, as indicated above, and during this time the South Vietnamese forces will continue to grow in numbers, experience, and effectiveness, and therefore in their ability to defend their frontiers and to handle the problem unassisted.

Q.—What is the nature of the operations off the coast of Cambodia?

A.—By these operations, Republic of Vietnam and U.S. naval forces seek to prevent resupply of the North Vietnam/Viet Cong Cambodian sanctuaries by sea. Vessels engaged in such traffic will be intercepted in the area from the Vietnamese-Cambodian border to the Vietnamese islands of Phu Quoc, east of Sihanoukville. There is no intention to interfere with other vessels or with Cambodian traffic. This is not a blockade.

Q.—What is the legal basis for the President's decision to commit American lives and materials in Cambodia?

A.—The President was acting under his constitutional authority as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States. Also, as Chief Executive, he has the supreme responsibility for determining and directing our foreign policy. This was basically a tactical decision by the Commander in Chief to protect U.S. forces in the field.

As for the international law basis for our actions, these are legitimate measures of collective self-defense. Cambodian neutrality had long ago been violated by North Vietnam which turned the sanctuary areas into a war zone directed against our troops.

Q.—Did the Administration consult with Congress prior to the action in Cambodia?

A.—The President has carried out his constitutional responsibility to keep Congress informed. As Commander in Chief it is also his responsibility to protect American lives, and he made his decision with that thought uppermost and mindful of the need for tight security before launching the strikes into Cambodia.

The President considered and rejected the option of large-scale U.S. arms aid, advisers, and U.S. combat forces for the defense of the Lon Nol government. The President stated in his White House meeting with Congressional committees that had he selected this option he would have fully consulted Congress.

Q.—What political support do we have from other Asian and Pacific countries for our Cambodian operation?

A.—Thailand, South Korea, Laos, the Republic of China and Australia have endorsed President Nixon's decision. Japan's Foreign Minister said he regards military operations in Cambodia as an "unavoidable step" under present circumstances. President Marcos of the Philippines has written the President in support of his decision.

Q.—Why do we support the Lon Nol government? Wasn't Sihanouk the legal ruler?

A.—The question of who governs Cambodia is for the Cambodians to decide. General Lon Nol has been Prime Minister of Cambodia for more than eight months.

The sequence of events began in August 1969 when Prince Sihanouk, as Head of State, formed a new government. General Lon Nol, as Prime Minister, selected a cabinet which was accepted by Prince Sihanouk and endorsed by the National Assembly.

On Jan. 6, 1970, Prince Sihanouk departed Cambodia for France, for medical treatment. He left behind mounting dissatisfaction with his economic and administrative policies, as well as with his lack of success in bringing about the withdrawal of Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces.

On March 18 the Cambodian National Assembly and the Council of the Kingdom, in joint session and in accordance with the Constitution, unanimously removed Prince Sihanouk from office and announced his replacement by Cheng Heng, the President of the National Assembly, to serve until new elections are held.

Q.—Did the Cambodian Government take any action to end North Vietnamese and Viet Cong occupation of its territory?

A.—Yes. Cambodian skirmishes with and military actions against the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army have become increasingly frequent in the past year. Prince Sihanouk has repeatedly called since early 1969 for the withdrawal of Communist forces, and went to Moscow in March to request

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COMMANDERS DIGEST

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Questions And Answers: The Situation In Cambodia

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Soviet help in persuading Communist forces to leave Cambodia. After the Cambodian National Assembly and Council of the Kingdom removed Sihanouk, the Government appealed to the Geneva conference cochairman, the U.K. and the U.S.S.R., for the reactivation without delay of the International Control Commission to protect Cambodian neutrality. The British were sympathetic to the request. The U.S.S.R. refused to act. The Cambodian Government also sought earnestly, both before and after Sihanouk's deposition, to engage in negotiations with the Vietnamese Communists for the peaceful withdrawal of their forces.

Q.—What actions are we taking in the diplomatic field while ground operations in Cambodia are underway? Have we given up hope of a successful outcome of the Paris peace talks?

A.—Several countries have advanced proposals for solutions of the problems in Indochina. Great Britain and New Zealand have shown interest in the renewal of the discussions between the parties involved in the 1954 Geneva accords. France has called for consultations on the subject. U.N. Secretary-General U Thant has recommended an international conference concerning Southeast Asia, which the United States welcomes.

Japan and Indonesia suggested a conference which was held in mid-May at Djakarta with 12 Asian nations present. Their communique urged that all foreign forces be withdrawn from Cambodia; that all parties respect the sovereignty, neutrality, independence and territorial integrity of Cambodia; and that the International Control Commission be reactivated. It also called for consultations looking toward the early convening of an international conference to find a just, effective and peaceful resolution of the present situation.

We believe that this communique is a significant manifestation of the determination of the countries in the region to seek a solution to the problems of restoration and maintenance of peace in Southeast Asia.

On March 6 President Nixon wrote to Great Britain and the Soviet Union, as co-chairmen of the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos, asking them to take the initiative in calling for consultations among the 14 signatories of the Geneva agreements with a view to restoring the neutrality of Laos, which is intensely concerned with the Indochinese problem. The President subsequently wrote in the same vein to all the 1962 Geneva signatories.

We have been engaged in talks on Vietnam at Paris since May 1968, and we regard Paris as the primary opportunity for the discussion and settlement of the conflict by negotiation. We will continue to be patient and conciliatory at the conference table in working for peace. We have offered to negotiate all issues with only the one condition that the future of South Vietnam be determined by the people of South Vietnam themselves. The President has said that we will pursue the path of peace not only at Paris but at "other forums that we are presently working on." He stated at his news conference on May 8:

> *". . . what we have to do is to go down the diplomatic trail, and that is why we are exploring with the Soviet Union—with not too much success to date, but we are going to continue to explore it—with Great Britain, with the Asian countries that are meeting in Djakarta, and through every possible channel, methods through which the neutrality of countries like Cambodia and Laos, who cannot possibly defend themselves . . . is guaranteed without having the intervention of foreign forces."*

Q.—Are the recent air strikes north of the demilitarized zone in Vietnam related to the operations in Cambodia?

A.—Only indirectly, to the extent that both are concerned with the security of our forces. We have made such attacks when necessary to protect our reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam which provide essential information for the safety of our forces in South Vietnam. When we stopped the bombing of North Vietnam in November 1968, we made it clear that we would continue to fly reconnaissance flights over that area and that if the enemy attacked them we would respond. Our recent responses have been against a very large complex of surface-to-air missile sites—anti-aircraft installations. This does not represent a new policy.

Q.—How will our action affect negotiations with the Soviet Union on such critical subjects as strategic arms limitations, the Middle East, etc.?

A.—It is our hope that they will continue without interruption. The SALT talks at Vienna are proceeding smoothly, free of polemics and propaganda. Our bilateral discussions on the Middle East are also continuing.

The President has stated that despite our differences with the Soviet Union on Southeast Asia and the Middle East, we have mutual interests in arms limitations, and has predicted that there *will* be an arms limitation agreement.

PENTAGON MEETING—U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam Ellsworth Bunker (left) and Ambassador Philip Habib (right), Chief U.S. Negotiator at the Paris peace talks, were recent Pentagon guests of Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird (center). While in the U.S. Ambassadors Bunker and Habib consulted with Government officials and received awards—Ambassador Bunker the U.S. Military Academy's Sylvanus Thayer Award and Ambassador Habib the Career Service Award of the National Civil Service League. In background is Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Daniel Z. Henkin.

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